

Osteoporosis Facts and Stats

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis (weak bones) is a disease characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue. This leads to fragile bones and increased susceptibility to fractures, especially of the hip, spine, and wrist. Osteoporosis is a “silent” disease, and people may not know they have it until a fracture occurs from a minor bump or strain.

How prevalent is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is thought of as a disease of older persons, but can strike at any age. Osteoporosis has been reported in all ethnic backgrounds.

- 52 percent of Caucasian women over 50 have low bone mass.
- 52 percent of Asian women over 50 have low bone mass.
- 49 percent of Hispanic women over 50 have low bone mass.
- 35 percent of non-Hispanic African-American women over 50 have low bone mass.

Osteoporosis is four times more common in women than in men. In the United States, more than 10 million people already have the disease. Another 34 million have low bone density, placing them at risk.

According to 2002 data from the National Osteoporosis Foundation, in Kentucky the estimated numbers of people affected by osteoporosis are

- 128,000 Kentucky women with diagnosed osteoporosis.
- 342,000 women diagnosed with low bone mass.
- 37,300 men with osteoporosis
- 223,400 men with low bone mass

The 2010 projected occurrences of osteoporosis are:

- 152,100 Kentucky women with osteoporosis.
- 407,400 Kentucky women with low bone mass.
- 45,800 Kentucky men with osteoporosis.
- 229,100 Kentucky men with low bone mass.

What are the effects of osteoporosis?

One in two women and one in four men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their remaining lifetime. Fractures result in pain, functional impairment, reduced quality of life and sometimes death. Two thirds of the people who fracture a hip never regain their pre-fracture level of independence. Fifty percent of those who survive a hip fracture will need long-term help with activities of daily living and 15 – 25 percent will require full-time nursing-home care. More than 20 percent of the people who suffer a hip fracture die within 12 months, usually from complications such as pneumonia or blood clots in the lung.

What should I do?

Discuss your risk for osteoporosis and low bone density with your health care professional. Early detection and treatment can help to prevent fractures and the associated morbidities linked to osteoporosis.

